

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 11335 260826Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11 OES-09 SP-02
SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /128 W
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2988
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E.O. N/A
TAGS: EARL, ENRG, PK, IN
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN GAS EXPORTS TO INDIA?

REF: EAL MEA 78-006

1. EMBOFF MET WITH K.K. SURI, FIRST SECRETARY (COMMERCIAL) PAKISTAN EMBASSY, NEW DELHI, TO DISCUSS OUTLOOK FOR NATURAL GAS EXPORTS TO INDIA. SURI, WHO SERVES ON INDO-PAK TRADE DELEGATIONS STATED THAT THE IMPORT OF GAS WAS FIRST SUGGESTED BY THE INDIAN DELEGATION DURING TRADE TALKS IN APRIL 1977, BUT REJECTED BY PAKISTAN. SURI SAID THAT SINCE PAKISTAN'S RESERVES OF NATURAL GAS AND DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS REMAINED UNCERTAIN THE GOP WAS UNLIKELY TO CONSIDER EXPORT OF GAS. DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION WAS EXPECTED TO INCREASE WITH DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL FERTILIZER PLANTS. THE FINANCING OF A PIPELINE WAS ALSO A QUESTIONABLE FACTOR.

2. SURI REASONED, HOWEVER, THAT IF NATURAL GAS WERE TO BE EXPORTED, RECENT GAS DISCOVERIES AT DULIAN AND DHODAK IN PUNJAB PROVINCE APPEARED TO BE THE MORE LOGICAL SOURCES OF SUPPLY THAN SUI IN VIEW OF THEIR LOCATION IF SUBSTANTIAL RESERVES COULD BE

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ESTABLISHED. DURING PERIOD OCT. 1977 TO APRIL 1978, PAKISTAN EXPORTED ABOUT 170,000 METRIC TONS (MT) OF FUEL OIL AND 60,000 MT NAPHTHA TO INDIA. SURI INDICATED THAT THESE SPOT PURCHASES WERE LARGELY TO HELP IMPROVE PAKISTAN'S TRADE IMBALANCE WITH INDIA.

3. FROM THE INDIAN POINT OF VIEW, THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR

COMMERCE, ARUF BAIG, TOLD PARLIAMENT ON JULY 18, 1978 THAT DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH PAKISTAN SOME REFERENCE TO THE EXPORT OF NATURAL GAS TO INDIA HAD ARISEN, BUT NO NEGOTIATIONS ON THE SUBJECT HAD SO FAR TAKEN PLACE. HE SAID THAT ONCE THE FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZNG NATURAL GAS FROM PAKISTAN WAS ESTABLISHED, THE GOI WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ITS IMPORT.

4. COMMENT: BEYOND THE MINISTER'S STATEMENTS IN PARLIAMENT, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE SO FAR TO DETERMINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF GOI INTENT TO IMPORT NATURAL GAS FROM PAKISTAN. THE SUBJECT COULD, NEVERTHELESS, SURFACE AGAIN DURING FORTHCOMING INDO-PAK TRADE TALKS. HOWEVER, JUDGING BY SURI'S COMMENTS THE PROJECT REMAINS QUESTIONABLE.

GOHEEN

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